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A Study of Word Usage in the Sixth Grades of the Omaha Public schools

Mary Lou Gallup

Municipal University of Omaha

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A STUDY OF WORD USAGE IN THE SIXTH GRADES OF THE
OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Division
Municipal University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Mary Lou Gallup
March 1956

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M. L. G.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

"Of all the phases of language instruction, that devoted to correct usage is possibly the least successful."¹ It has been found that errors that were in the children's speech when they entered school tend to persist in spite of the fact that most or all of these errors have repeatedly been the subject of correct-usage lessons year after year. English usage is under fire of critics who question the functions that the schools are now performing. The intermediate department of the school system, particularly the sixth grade, is highly challenged in this respect.

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to test a cross section of the sixth grades in the Omaha Public Schools in order to compare achievement in correct word usage (1) in relation to the general economic status; (2) in relation to the sex; (3) in order to locate any areas of difficulty for this age and grade level; and (4) to find the areas, if any, in which reteaching would be profitable.

¹Mildred A. Dawson, Teaching Language in the Grades (Yonkers-on-Hudson-New York: World Book Company, 1951) p. 273.

Importance of the study. In our ever-shrinking world, the art of communication is becoming increasingly important. Speech is related to thinking and listening. Logical thinking and good speech are closely related. Therefore, to guide a child in speaking helps his thinking process just as clear thinking makes for good speech. The function of correct-usage is to help the child clarify his ideas and to communicate them effectively.

The goals of teaching the language arts are old, in fact, as old as the ideals of Western civilization: "To think clearly and honestly, to read effectively, to communicate effectively, and to listen intelligently are as important today as they ever were. Yet, each generation faces the task of interpreting these goals anew in the light of the conditions of its own age."²

With this in mind, it was the purpose of the study to make teachers and pupils aware of the social value of accepted standards of correct word usage, since it is of great importance to the user, the listener, and the reader alike.

²The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English, Language Arts for Today's Children (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1954), p. 4.

Delimitations. The problem was limited to sixth grade pupils in the Omaha Public Schools. It was further limited to two classes of sixth grade pupils from each of four economic classes. These children were selected according to a plan of stratified random sampling. They were representative of four economic classes according to the Child Study Service, Department of Psychology, University of Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska; also according to Mr. Fred Hill, Associate Superintendent of Schools, Omaha, Nebraska. The plan of selection will be explained in Chapter II.

Definitions. As to the term "correct-usage" there is a diversity of opinion. Fries takes a conventional point of view in his analysis:

Instead of having to deal with a mass of diverse forms which can be easily separated into the two groups of mistakes and correct language according to perfectly definite measures, the language scholar finds himself confronted by a complex range of differing practices which must be sorted into an indefinite number of groups according to a set of somewhat indistinct criteria called "general usage." . . . All considerations of an absolute "correctness" must be set aside. We assume therefore that there can be no "correctness" apart from usage and that the true forms of "standard" English are those that are actually used in that particular dialect.³

³Charles Carpenter Fries, American English Grammar (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1940), pp. 5 and 15.

Opposed to the above-mentioned conventional point of view is that held by outstanding scholars in English language during the last hundred years. Sweet calls it the scientific point of view. He continues:

In considering the use of grammar as a corrective of what are called "ungrammatical" expressions, it must be borne in mind that the rules of grammar have no value except as statements of facts: whatever is in general use in a language is for that very reason grammatically correct.⁴

Perhaps there is no definite definition of the term "correct-usage." White expressed his opinion thus:

The truth is, however, that authority of general usage, or even of the usage of great writers, is not absolute in language. There is a misuse of words which can be justified by no authority, however great, and by no usage however general.⁵

There are difficulties in defining the term "correct-usage," but for the purposes of this investigation the term "usage" is more expressly defined as:

the customary practice of a given group of people with respect to the social activity of the speech. This is manifestly a broad definition, and covers all the activities of language, but it is only by looking at the matter from this comprehensive point of view that a sound practical approach to the specific questions of usage can be made.⁶

⁴Henry Sweet, New English Grammar (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), Vol. I, p. 5.

⁵R. G. White, Words and Their Uses (revised edition Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), p. 14.

⁶Paul Monroe (ed.), A Cyclopedia of Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), Vol. II, p. 483.

According to Paul Monroe:

A standard of speech is the sum of those similarities among the different members of a speech community which together constitute the grounds for assuming the existence of a uniform and single practice in the speech.⁷

It is evident that the grammarian must work in the same way as the lexicographer, which is the way of the scientist. He must observe and examine his material, classify and organize it, and draw whatever conclusions or general statements this observation and classification may permit.

Review of the Literature. Many investigations of the so-called "common error" in the English of pupils have been made in the hope of determining the particular errors which children make most frequently. Although some of these investigations have had inaccurate and unreliable conclusions, they have revealed a striking similarity of results. The same categories of "errors" appear with the highest counts in all the studies. Charters insists that " . . . the similarity of frequencies in errors in cities widely distributed geographically indicates that a large proportion of the errors of school children are national rather than sectional errors."⁸

⁷Ibid., p. 484.

⁸W. W. Charters, Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Bloomington, Indiana: Public School Publishing Company, 1917), p. 110.

However, there have been no studies or surveys made comparing achievement in correct word usage as to economic status or sex, nor locating areas of difficulty, on the sixth grade level.

O'Rourke did a study on correct-usage on the seventh grade level which showed: "Only 34.7 per cent of correct-usage was known by seventh grade pupils and 85 per cent by those in thirteenth grade."⁹ Even in this study, economic status or sex, was not considered.

The next chapter will review the methods and procedures used in this investigation.

⁹Mildred A. Dawson, "Summary of Research Concerning English Usage," Elementary English, Vol. XXVIII (March, 1951), pp. 141-7.

CHAPTER II

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The study was based primarily on a Word Usage Test distributed to specific sixth grades in the Omaha Public Schools. One of the objectives of the test was to compare the achievement in correct word usage as to the economic status of the school. In attempting to do this, a stratified random sampling of the population of Omaha was needed. "With this method, the population is divided into numerous layers or strata and the units are drawn as nearly as possible at random from each layer. The proportionate representation of each layer in the sample is the same as its proportionate representation in the whole population."¹

This, in turn, presented the problem of scientific stratification of the population. Cantril suggested: "In the construction of nation-wide poll samples--the standard practice is to stratify with respect to geographical distribution, color and economic status."²

¹Hadley Cantril, Gauging Public Opinion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 142.

²Ibid., p. 143.

In an investigation made by Chambers and Bell,³ it was found that stratification by economic status was a more objective method. To make this study as objective and scientific as possible, economic classifications used by the Psychological Corporation were employed and included the use of the four economic groups: A, B, C, and D.⁴

According to statistics obtained from the Board of Education of the Omaha Public Schools, there were 2,540 sixth grade children in the Omaha Public Schools at the time the Word Usage Test was administered. It seemed necessary to impose a limitation on the number in the sample. This restriction raised an important question: How large would the sample have to be so that the results would be representative? According to Gallup: "Actually the size of the sample is far less important as a factor in achieving reliable results in modern polling than the representativeness of the persons chosen to be interviewed."⁵

³M. M. Chambers and Howard M. Bell, "How to Make a Community Youth Survey," American Council on Education Studies, Vol. III (January, 1939), pp. 19 and 20.

⁴Henry Link, Eighth Nation-wide Social and Experimental Survey, (New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1943), p. 2.

⁵George Gallup, A Guide to Public Opinion Polls (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 13.

In another portion of the same reference, Gallup writes:

Assuming that a correct cross-section of the people have been chosen, a sample which includes as few as a hundred voters might provide a good prediction of an election or a referendum. When the sample is properly selected, the laws of "probability" or of "averages" reveal the likelihood of error at each stage, as the sample is increased in size. For example, if only a hundred persons properly selected were interviewed in a national survey, the outside margin of error would be fifteen per cent.⁶

Blankenship described the four economic groups--
A, B, C, and D--in the following way:

The A group is the highest ten per cent of the population in terms of income. These homes will be those in the very best sections, usually having two or more cars, nine room house or larger, and servants' quarters. The persons in this group will be largely successful business men and professional people, executives, etc.

The B group comprises the next thirty per cent of the population. It will generally include one family and some two family houses, containing eight rooms or less, and a few of the better class apartments will also fall within this class. Wage earners of this group will be well-paid clerical workers or skilled factory workers. This is the upper middle-class group.

The lower middle-class group is the C group, composed of the next forty per cent of the families. This group will be mechanics, factory workers, and the lower-paid business, clerical, and professional persons.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

There still remains the lowest twenty per cent of the population and this is the D group. These people have very few autos, practically none have electric or automatic refrigerators. The slum element of your town will be included here, as well as the tenement sections. Most Negro and foreign language sections fall into this group.⁷

With the kind assistance of Mr. Fred Hill, Associate Superintendent of Schools, 8 schools were selected according to the above data. Of these 8 schools, two were from the A group, two from the B group, two from the C group, and two from the D group. Also, Mr. Hill explained to the sixth grade teachers the purpose of the study, and the eight six-grade teachers kindly cooperated. Specific directions for administering the test were not given to the teachers, since the teachers have opportunity to administer standardized tests to students each year and are very familiar with standardized testing procedures.

All of the Word Usage Tests were given within a fifteen day period of time, April 12, 1955, to April 27, 1955. Testing at this particular time of the year provided that approximately ninety per cent of the sixth grade term had been completed. Thus, a test covering correct word usage in the sixth grade was not invalid as to testing prematurely.

Considering that there were no standardized tests published which covered specifically correct usage in the sixth grade, a teacher-made test was mandatory. Clifford Woody,

⁷Albert B. Blankenship, Consumer and Opinion Research (New York: Harper Brothers, 1943), p. 103.

Director of the Bureau of Mental Tests and Measurements at the University of Michigan, recognizes teacher-made tests as worthwhile:

Informal tests are a valuable supplement to the standardized tests. Many of the standard tests have but a single edition and this edition may soon lose its value if extensively used within a school system. This single edition may be sufficient for⁸ reliably measuring the achievement of an individual.

Since this study was a comparison of achievement within a city only, the following statement by Woody is also significant: "While there will be no well established standards of comparison for the informal tests, it must not be forgotten that the most significant standards of comparison for any city are developed within a city itself."⁹

Butler further substantiates the point at hand:

If we must have standings, they should be determined in large measure from the results of frequent well-chosen tests, so that they may represent as closely as possible the relative ability of the pupils. I know of no better way to test the quality of teaching or the achievement of the class than by the informal test.¹⁰

⁸Clifford Woody, The First Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals (Washington, D. C., Department of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association of the United States, 1922), p. 142.

⁹Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁰William F. Butler, The First Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals (Washington, D. C., Department of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association of the United States, 1922), p. 94.

The compilation of the test was a task to be carefully done in order to cover all the aspects of correct-usage in the sixth grade curriculum. The following books were studied thoroughly and used finally as a check upon each other:

1. Handbook of English for Boys and Girls, edited by the Commission of the National Conference on Research in English, Robert C. Pooley, Chairman, published by Scott Foresman and Company, 1939. 55 pages.
2. A Course of Study for Grade Six, edited and published by the Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1941. 444 pages.
3. Course of Study for Language Arts, Grades Six, Seven, and Eight, published by Dallas Public Schools, Dallas, Texas, 1943. 28 pages.
4. Course of Study Monograph - English Expression, published by Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado, 1931. 91 pages.
5. Language Arts for the Spokane Elementary School - A Course of Study, published by Spokane Public Schools, Spokane, Washington, 1946. 55 pages.
6. The Intermediate Manual, Grades Four, Five, and Six, Curriculum Bulletin 125, published by the Board of Education, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1945. 495 pages.

—These six books were compared with the current sixth grade English textbook of the Omaha Public Schools, Sharing Ideas.¹¹ From this material a Word Usage Test having a hundred questions was compiled.

¹¹Thomas Clark Pollock, Sharing Ideas (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), 327 pp.

NAME _____

DATE _____

SCHOOL _____

WORD USAGE TEST

You are asked to read the sentences below and to write the word which would make the sentence correct in the space provided at the end of each sentence.

SECTION A - PRONOUNS IN THE SUBJECT

1. Jim and (I, me) are collecting stamps. _____
2. (We, Us) boys have a team. _____
3. Ted, Jack and (me, I) have fun. _____
4. (She, Her) and I are good friends. _____
5. (We, Us) boys and girls planted a tree. _____
6. (He, Him) and I are going to trade stamps. _____
7. (They, Them) and Janet bought the seeds. _____
8. (She, Her) and Jack gave each of us a seed. _____
9. The girls and (them, they) ate lunch with me. _____
10. (He, Him) and Miss Smith divided the candy. _____
11. Miss Lee and (I, me) passed the candy. _____

SECTION B - PRONOUNS AFTER IS, ARE, WAS, AND WERE

12. The best writer in the room is (him, he). _____
13. It was (he, him) who broke the window. _____
14. The sports editors are George and (him, he). _____
15. The fastest runner was (him, he). _____
16. The assistant editors were Jack and (her, she). _____
17. The best tennis players were Mary and (he, him). _____

SECTION B - Continued

18. The representatives of our club are (them, they). _____
19. The slowest eater in our family is (she, her). _____
20. The best reporters in the class are Mary
and (I, me). _____

SECTION C - PRONOUNS AFTER PREPOSITIONS

21. A package came for Don and (I, me). _____
22. It was from Charlie and (he, him). _____
23. They divided the work between (him, he) and her. _____

SECTION D - PRONOUNS AFTER ACTION VERBS, ARTICLES A, AN

24. The lightning frightened (us, we) girls. _____
25. Jerry nominated Paul and (he, him). _____
26. The policeman helped (we, us) boys home. _____
27. Her aunt took Sue and (they, them) to the zoo. _____
28. They pushed Ted, Bob, and (me, I). _____
29. (A, An) umpire is an authority in a game. _____
30. In England (an, a) elevator is called a lift. _____
31. An honor was bestowed upon (an, a) hero. _____

SECTION E - ADJECTIVES, THEM AND THOSE

32. My uncle gave me (them, those) books about
stamps. _____
33. I bought (them, those) from stamp dealers. _____
34. You can't ask for all (them, those) apples. _____

SECTION F - ADVERBS

35. He was (too, to) late to hear the news. _____
36. (To, Too, Two) boys went on a picnic. _____

SECTION F - Continued

37. They walked (to, too, two) the park. _____
38. The girls were happy (to, two, too). _____
39. She sang the song very (softly, soft). _____
40. Don swims (well, good). _____
41. Mary speaks too (loud, loudly). _____
42. Rudy had to dress very (quickly, quick). _____
43. I don't feel (good, well) today. _____

SECTION G - AGREEMENT OF VERB AND SUBJECT

44. Ted and John (was, were) absent. _____
45. Dogs, cats, and turtles (is, are) good pets. _____
46. Mechanics (repair, repairs) automobiles. _____
47. The chemist (performs, perform) experiments. _____
48. The children (were, was) on the ice. _____
49. There (is, are) pencils in the drawer. _____
50. There (aren't, isn't) any magazines left. _____
51. He (don't, doesn't) think it will snow. _____
52. It (doesn't, don't) matter if it does. _____
53. (Was, Were) you fishing last week? _____
54. (Were, Was) Mary and Sue at the picnic? _____

SECTION H - VERBS WITH EITHER AND NEITHER AS SUBJECTS

55. Neither of them (are, is) mine. _____
56. Either of the balls (is, are) suitable. _____
57. Either of the girls (are, is) capable. _____
58. Neither of them (is, are) willing to help. _____
59. Each of the boys (are, is) to blame. _____

SECTION I - VERBS FREQUENTLY MISUSED

60. They (ought, had ought) to call us. _____
61. May I (set, sit) beside you today? _____
62. Mother says I (may, can) go to the store with
you. _____
63. I (can, may) swim like a fish. _____
64. Please (let, leave) me borrow your pencil. _____
65. Don't (leave, let) Sue follow us. _____
66. Will you (teach, learn) me to cook. _____
67. I like to (lie, lay) on the floor. _____
68. He (taught, learned) me how to pitch. _____
69. (Lie, Lay) the book on the table. _____
70. The farmer (raises, rises) early in the day. _____
71. He (raises, rises) the window every night. _____
72. Who (gave, give) it to him? _____
73. It was (given, give) to him as a prize. _____

SECTION J - VERBS THAT NEED HELPERS

74. I had (began, begun) to read the story before. _____
75. Has the class bell (rung, rang) yet? _____
76. Mother said she had (wrote, written) lately. _____
77. Mr. Brown had (spoken, spoke) to the boys. _____
78. We have (done, did) everything we planned to do. _____
79. I wish I had (ate, eaten) less pie. _____
80. We (ran, run) all the way home. _____
81. My brother has (took, taken) my sled. _____

SECTION J - Continued

82. The chorus (sang, sung) last week. _____
83. The plant has (grown, grew) taller every year. _____
84. Who (drank, drunk) all the milk? _____
85. We can skate if the pond has (froze, frozen). _____
86. Has your father (came, come) home from his trip? _____
87. We (saw, seen) a clown act at the fair. _____
88. Jack has (saw, seen) it many times. _____
89. I wish I could have (gone, went) with him. _____
90. He has (drew, drawn) many pictures of horses. _____

SECTION K - DOUBLE NEGATIVES

91. Thank you, I can't eat (no, any) pie. _____
92. He doesn't have (no, any) paper. _____
93. Can't (anybody, nobody) work this puzzle? _____
94. It's good, but I don't (ever, never) eat pie. _____
95. There isn't (nothing, anything) I like better. _____

SECTION L - POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

96. Carpenters must keep (there, their) tools sharp. _____
97. (Their, There) house is beautiful. _____
98. Your books are over (their, there). _____

SECTION M - PREPOSITION AT THE END OF A SENTENCE

99. He lost his shoes, but (where, where at)? _____
100. He took the wagon (from, from off) the porch. _____

On pages 13 through 17 is the Master Copy of the Word Usage Test showing the grammatical divisions, labeled as to SECTIONS, and the number of questions allotted to each division. For example: SECTION A, questions one through eleven are indicative of "PRONOUNS IN THE SUBJECT." However, when the test was prepared for the children, the headings were omitted and the questions grouped in series of ten questions each to allow for simplicity and understandability. The grammatical divisions are indicated below:

SECTION	Question No.	Description
A	1-11	Pronouns in the subject
B	12-20	Pronouns after <u>is</u> , <u>are</u> , <u>was</u> , <u>were</u>
C	21-23	Pronouns after prepositions
D	24-31	Pronouns after action verbs
E	32-34	Adjectives: <u>them</u> and <u>those</u>
F	35-43	Adverbs
G	44-54	Agreement of verb and subject
H	55-59	Verbs; either and neither as subject
I	60-73	Verbs frequently misused
J	74-90	Verbs that need helpers
K	91-95	Double negatives
L	96-98	Possessive pronouns
M	98-100	Prepositions at the end of sentences

It is noticeable that some of the grammatical divisions are larger than others. For example: SECTION A, PRONOUNS IN THE SUBJECT, has eleven questions; whereas, SECTION C, PRONOUNS AFTER PREPOSITIONS, has only three questions. This is in accordance with the material allotted to each division in the various texts used to compile the test. A proportionate amount of time is spent learning PRONOUNS IN THE SUBJECT as to learning PRONOUNS AFTER PREPOSITIONS, difficulty of the learning being considered. Also, more time was given to items found to be in more frequent usage in everyday language. Since this is one of the basic principles of textbook compilation, tests must be in agreement to be valid.

The tests were scored and the results tabulated. This represented the number of questions correct out of the hundred.

A tally sheet was made for each sixth grade class which recorded the question number, the number of boys missing each question, and the number of girls missing the question. For example:

(Please refer to following page)

SCHOOL A ₁		
<u>Question No.</u>	<u>No. Errors-Boys</u>	<u>No. Errors-Girls</u>
1.	0	1
2.	11111, 11	11111, 111
3.	1	1
4.	0	11
5.	11111, 11	11

After each question was tallied, the frequency tables were made from the tally sheets, and according to grammatical division. As in School A₁, SECTION A, which is the first grammatical division having eleven questions, the number of boys missing question one was 0; the number of girls missing question one was 1. Therefore, the total errors for question one was 1. Then the total for all the questions missed in School A₁, SECTION A, were tabulated. See Table I. In like manner, the total errors for each SECTION were totaled under the name of the school.

Knowing the total number of errors for each school according to the grammatical division or SECTION, the following procedure was used to find the per cent correct for each:

To illustrate, School A₁ had thirty-six students who took the test. In SECTION A there were 11 questions:

TABLE I
FREQUENCY TABLE
FOR SCHOOL A₁

SECTION	Boys Errors	Girls Errors	Total Errors
A	34	23	57
B	80	75	155
C	13	9	22
D	14	12	26
E	2	0	2
F	36	28	64
G	21	11	32
H	63	94	157
I	44	27	71
J	49	24	73
K	7	3	10
L	9	8	17
M	8	13	21

Thus:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 36 \text{ students} \\
 \times 11 \text{ questions in SECTION A} \\
 \hline
 36 \\
 396 \\
 -57 \\
 \hline
 339 \text{ total correct answers or } 86\% \text{ correct}
 \end{array}$$

In this manner, Figures 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11 were made, showing the percentage of correct scores for each SECTION. Upon completion of the graphs, the two schools representing the same economic group, as Schools A₁ and A₂, were combined to present an average per cent for each economic group. Figure 3 illustrates a combined graph. With the four combination graphs, Figures 3, 6, 9, and 12, conclusions were made readily accessible.

From these four figures (3, 6, 9, and 12) a summary was made, Figure 13, which assimilated all the material found. This summary gives a picture of the average percentage of correct scores for all the eight schools tested, according to the grammatical division or SECTION. As in SECTION A, PRONOUNS IN THE SUBJECT, all the children in all the economic groups tested, A-D, averaged a total of seventy-eight per cent correct. The seventy-eight per cent was arrived at by the following procedure:

<u>ECONOMIC GROUP</u>	<u>SECTION</u>
	A B C D E F G H I J K L M
A	88 (percentage of correct scores--Figure 3)
B	80 (percentage of correct scores--Figure 6)
C	71 (percentage of correct scores--Figure 9)
D	<u>71</u> (percentage of correct scores--Figure 12)
TOTAL	310

In other words, the total percentages for all four economic groups in SECTION A was 310. Therefore, SECTION A had an average of 78 per cent. Averages were found for all the SECTIONS, A through M.

In view of the fact that this study was not primarily interested in achievement comparisons as to grammatical division, it was necessary to organize the data according to economic groups. This is shown in Figure 14. All the correct percentage scores for all the grammatical divisions in each economic groups were totaled and the mean for each obtained, which gave the average per cent correct for each economic group. Table II shows the data.

The second purpose of the survey was to compare achievement in correct word usage as to sex. Questions such as, "Do girls really find English easier than do boys?" are asked often. Some have said that girls are just more interested in the subject than boys. Table III shows a

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF THE AVERAGE PER CENT OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST ACCORDING TO
ECONOMIC GROUPING

<u>Section</u>	<u>Economic Groups</u>			
	A Per Cent Correct	B Per Cent Correct	C Per Cent Correct	D Per Cent Correct
A	88	80	71	71
B	66	44	45	65
C	76	76	72	68
D	87	80	81	80
E	92	86	87	89
F	79	78	71	68
G	93	91	87	77
H	13	24	17	24
I	89	92	90	83
J	88	81	81	70
K	95	94	91	84
L	85	84	80	80
M	<u>80</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>61</u>
TOTAL	1,031	975	949	920
AVERAGE PERCENTAGE	79.3	75.0	73.0	70.8

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF BOYS TO GIRLS
AS TO NUMBER OF QUESTIONS MISSED

CLASS DIVISION	NUMBER OF BOYS	BOYS NUMBER OF ERRORS	ERRORS PER BOY	NUMBER OF GIRLS	GIRLS NUMBER OF ERRORS	ERRORS PER GIRL
GROUP A						
Class A ₁	15	380		21	326	
Class A ₂	20	347	20.7	20	349	
TOTAL	35	727		41	675	16.4
GROUP B						
Class B ₁	12	261		17	245	
Class B ₂	20	607	27.1	16	368	
TOTAL	32	868		33	613	18.5
GROUP C						
Class C ₁	15	427		16	253	
Class C ₂	18	549	29.5	13	355	
TOTAL	33	976		29	608	20.9
GROUP D						
Class D ₁	8	481		20	479	
Class D ₂	17	237	28.7	13	450	
TOTAL	25	718		33	929	28.1
GRAND TOTAL	125	3289	26.5	136	2825	20.9

most interesting comparison of achievement in the sixth grades tested. The percentage of the errors made is tabulated according to each economic group. To illustrate: The boys in school A_1 made 380 errors and the boys in school A_2 made 347 errors, making a total of 727 errors. The total number of errors divided by the total number of boys in that economic group equaled 20.7 errors per boy.

The same method was used to find the number of errors per girl. In economic group A, the girls made a total of 675 errors. The total number of girls was forty-one; therefore, the number of errors per girl was 16.4. The difference between the errors made by the boys and the girls was then 4.3 more errors per boy than per girl.

In order to analyze each question separately, Table IV was made indicating how many pupils of each economic group missed each question. The total questions missed were summed and divided by the number of pupils taking the usage test, 261 in all. This gave the percentage of all pupils of all the economic groups missing each test question. Therefore, the difficulty of the questions was easily compared. For example, question one shows only 2.6 per cent of the pupils missing it; whereas, question two shows much more difficulty with 38.6 per cent of the pupils missing it.

This section has described the method of procedure.
In the following chapter, a summary will be made of all
the data collected.

CHAPTER III

A SUMMARY OF THE DATA

The first purpose of this investigation was to test a cross section of the sixth grades in the Omaha Public Schools in order to compare achievement in correct word usage as to the general economic status.

Analysis of Economic-Group-A Schools, Figures

1, 2, and 3. Figure 1 shows the correct percentage scores from A school, more specifically school A₁. Economically, this is the highest ten per cent of the population in terms of income. This school shows ten of the thirteen grammatical SECTIONS, A through M, rating 80 per cent or above. However, there is a decided drop in the H SECTION to 13 per cent, which is concerned with the choice of a singular or a plural verb with either and neither as subjects. An example would be:

"Neither of them (are, is) mine."

SECTION B is below average also, 52 per cent correct. This SECTION was concerned with pronouns after is, are, was, and were. An example of an item from this SECTION:

"It was (he, him) who broke the window."

SECTION M is somewhat low in comparison to the other SECTIONS. SECTION M was concerned with the use of a preposition at the end of a sentence:

"He lost his shoes, but (where, where at)?"

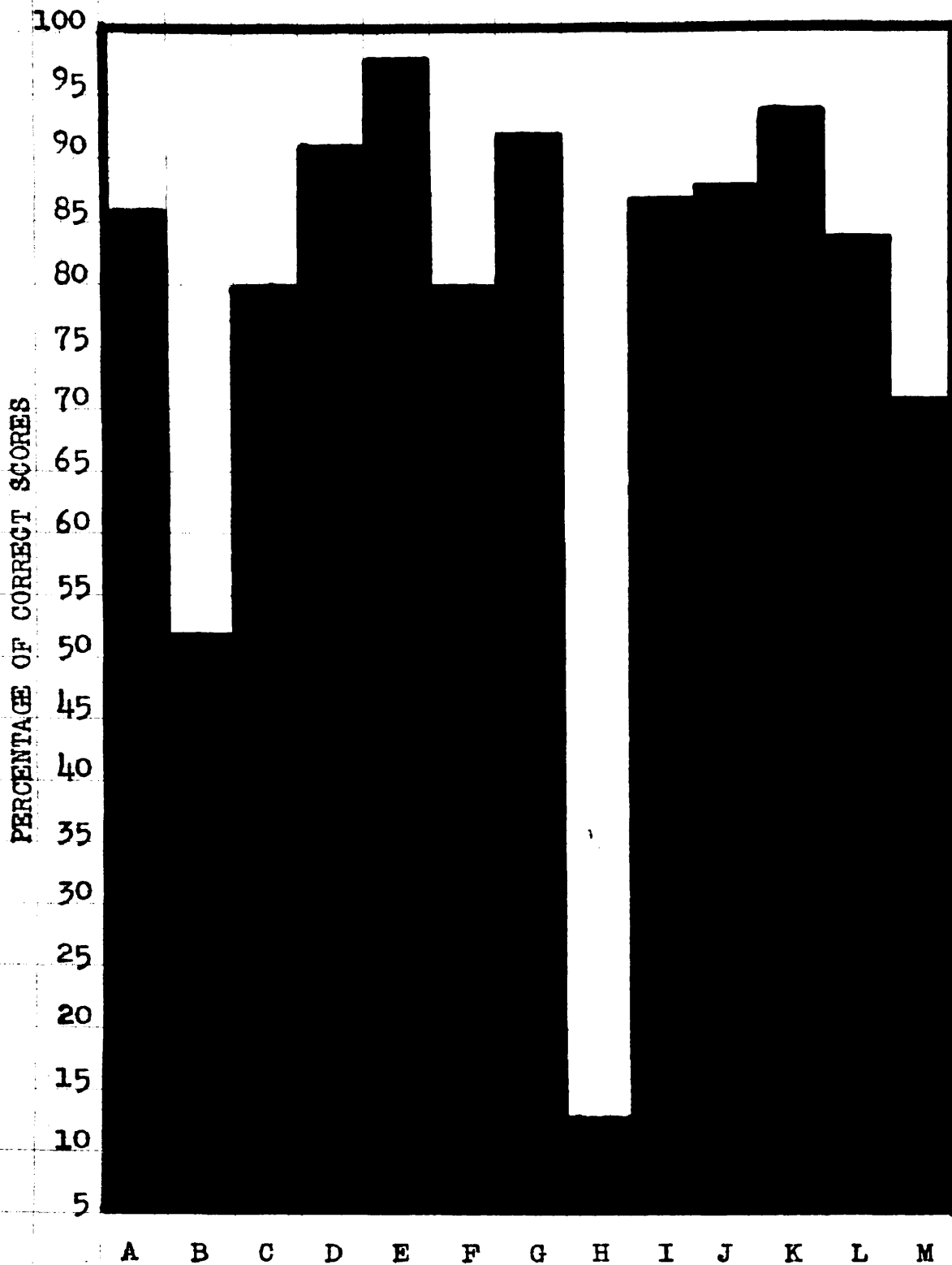


FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL A₁

In Figure 2, the second A school, designated as school A_2 , there are also ten out of thirteen grammatical divisions rating 80 per cent or more. Here again there is a striking drop in correct scores in SECTION H, using either and neither as subjects. However, this is the only instance in schools A_1 and A_2 where the low scores coincide. School A_2 has the next largest drop in SECTION C with only 70 per cent correct. This SECTION deals with pronouns after prepositions as in:

"A package came for Don and (I, me)."

Figure 3 combines the data given in Figures 1 and 2, showing an average per cent correct for both A schools combined. As in school A_2 , there are only three sections below the 80 per cent rating; SECTION B (pronouns after is, are, was, and were), SECTION C (pronouns after prepositions), and SECTION H (using either and neither as subjects).

The conclusion for economic group A is that further analysis of SECTIONS B, C, AND H should be made to discover the reasons for the difficulties.

Analysis of Economic-Group-B Schools, Figures 4, 5, and 6. Economic group B comprises the next thirty per cent of the population and is the upper middle-class group. Figure 4 represents school B_1 . The number of SECTIONS below the 80 per cent mark has increased to five.

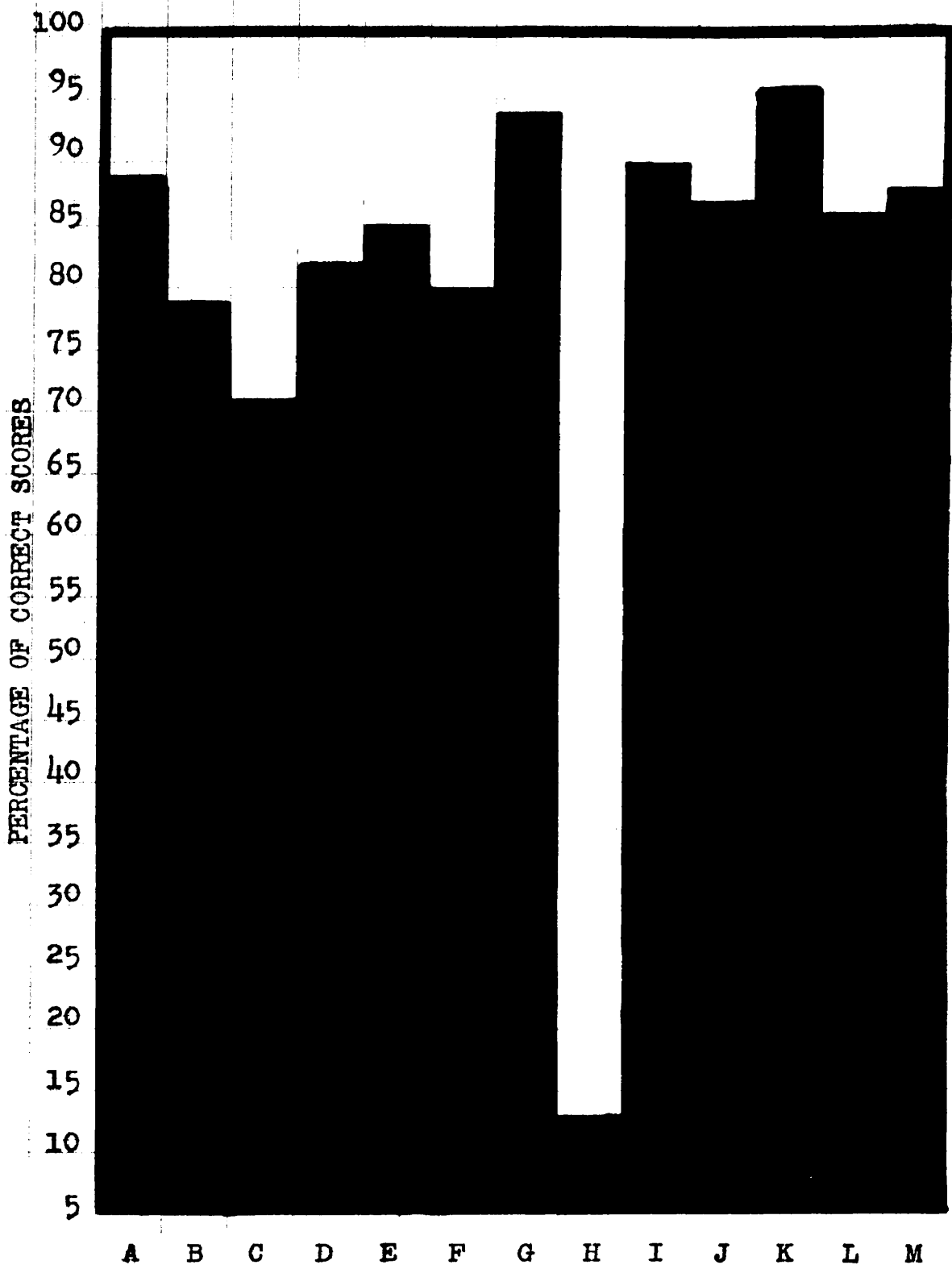


FIGURE 2

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL A₂

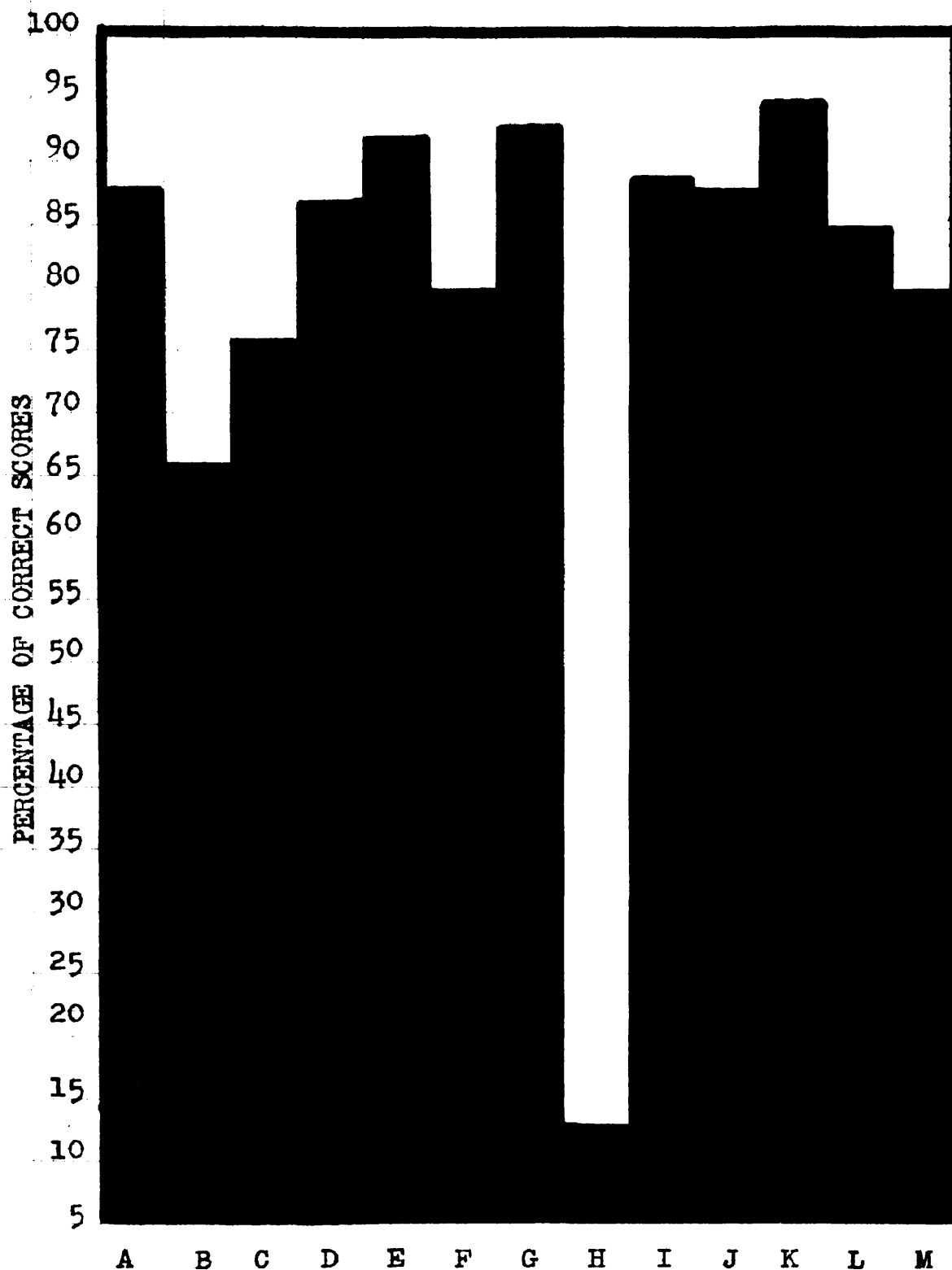


FIGURE 3

COMBINED PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT
SCORES ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOLS A₁ AND A₂

SECTION H remains low, and SECTION B (pronouns after is and are), drops to 46 per cent as did economic group A drop. SECTION M (prepositions at the end of a sentence), is the next lowest with a score of 65 per cent. SECTION C (pronouns after prepositions), and SECTION D, (pronouns after action verbs), are also below the 80 per cent correct score.

The second school in economic group B is represented by Figure 5, school B₂. Out of thirteen sections, there are six sections 80 per cent or above, leaving seven sections 80 per cent or below. This observation shows that school B₂ is two sections lower than school B₁. Also, in comparing the two B schools, SECTION H shows only 1 per cent difference, with B₁ school rating 23 per cent correct and B₂ rating 24 per cent correct. The B SECTION is very low, and SECTION A (pronouns in the subject), SECTION F (adverbs), and SECTION M (prepositions at the end of the sentence), need particular attention.

The great variability between the B₁ and B₂ schools is of significance. What is the cause of the difference when both schools are of the same economic strata? Is it possible that there are greater differences than economic differences in some schools, in some classes? This problem will be discussed further in Chapter IV, Generalizations and Conclusions.

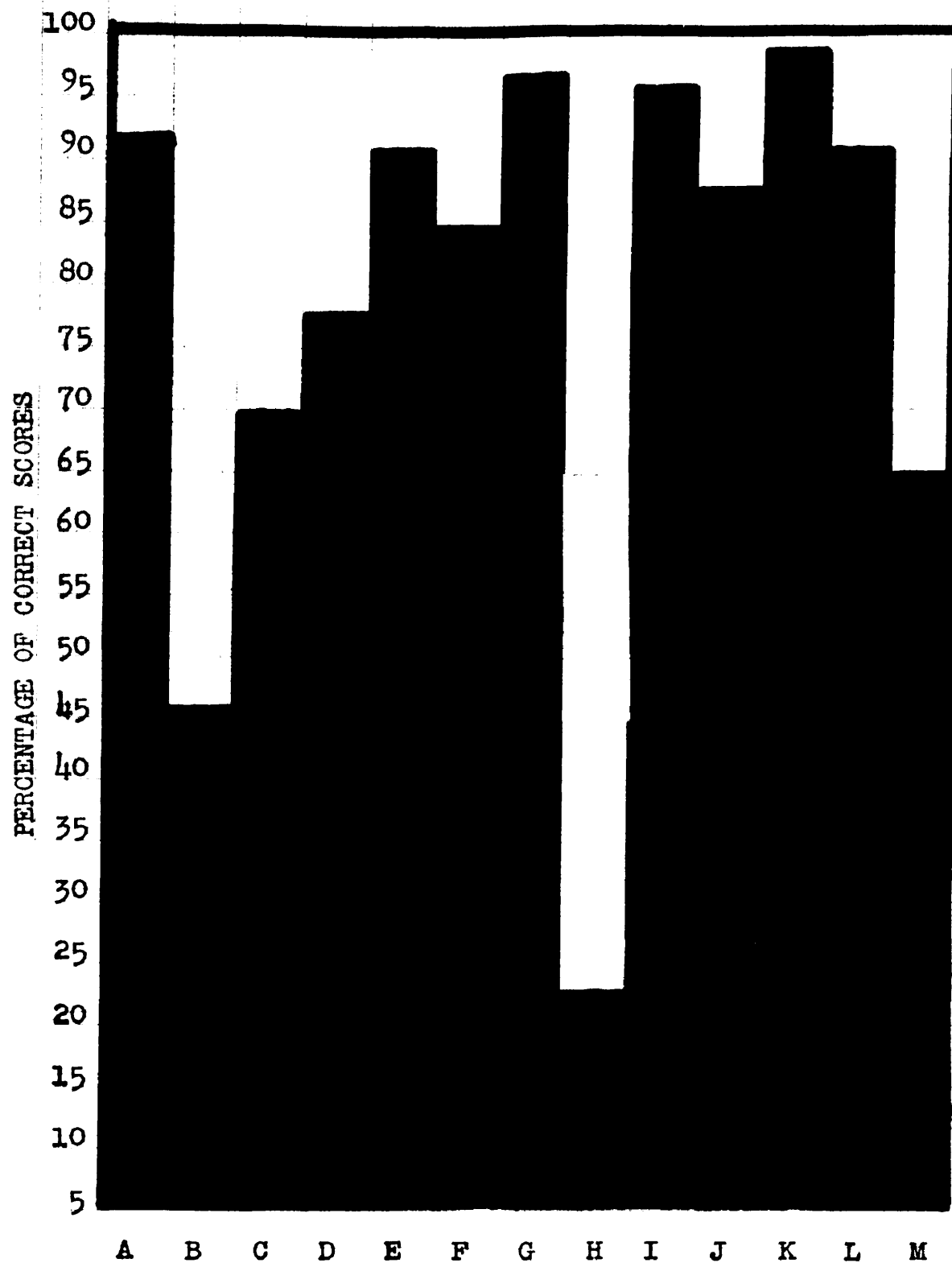


FIGURE 4
PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL B₁

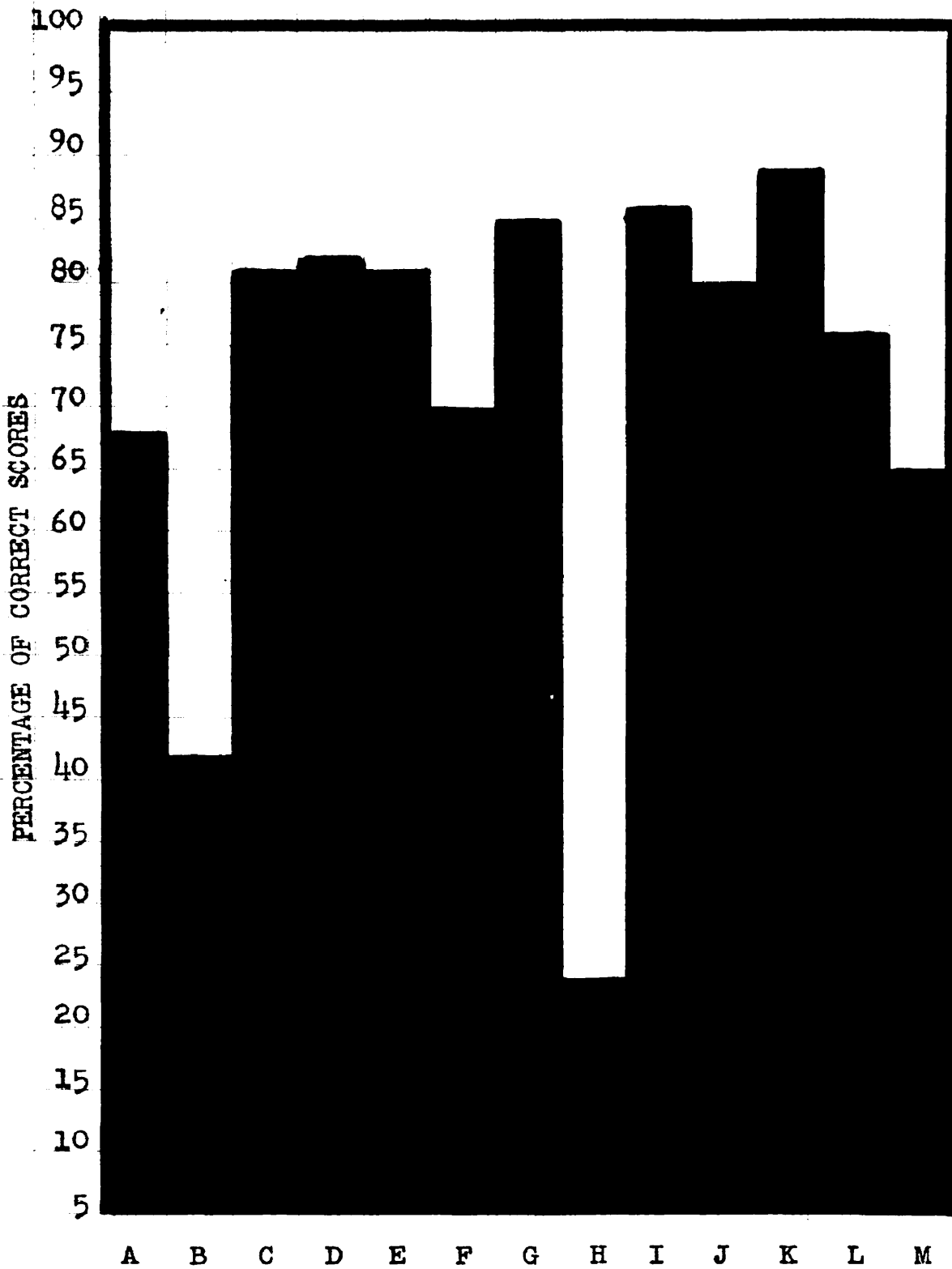


FIGURE 5

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL B₂

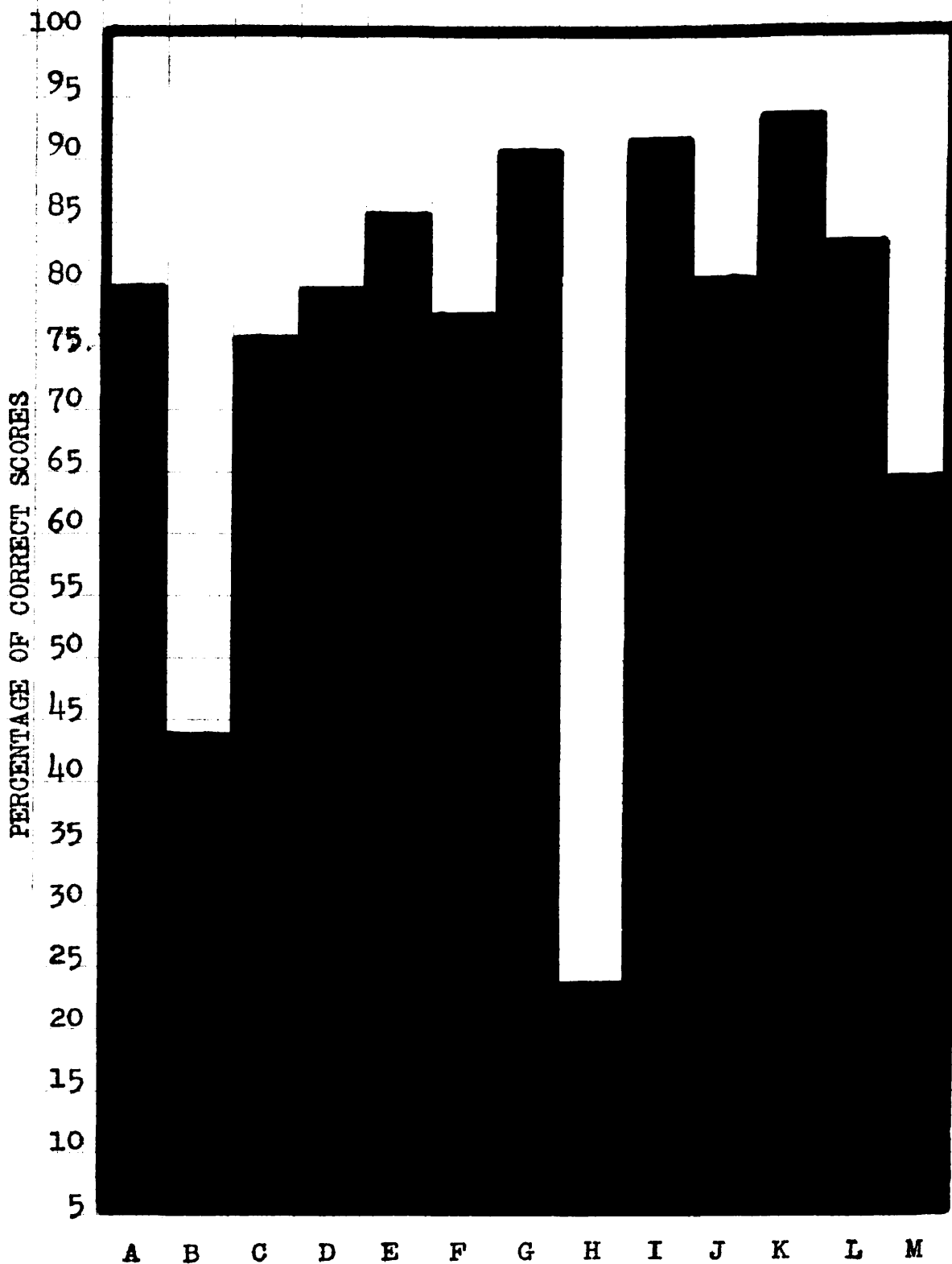


FIGURE 6

COMBINED PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT
SCORES ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOLS B₁ AND B₂

As to the average combined percentage scores of schools B_1 and B_2 in Figure 6, SECTIONS B, F, H, AND M proved to be the most difficult and need the most consideration.

Analysis of Economic-Group-C Schools, Figures 7, 8, and 9. The lower middle-class group is the C group, consisting of the next forty per cent of the families. Figure 7 represents one of such schools, school C_1 . There are only three sections in this graph which rate below 80 per cent correct. This is better than either of the B schools. The H SECTION is by far the lowest with 19 per cent correct. Second lowest is the B SECTION, showing difficulty again with the pronouns following is, are, was, and were. Thirdly, the F SECTION with 71 per cent correct should be higher.

At this point in the summary it is noticeable that in all the economic groups, the pupils have experienced more difficulty with SECTIONS H, B, and F respectively.

School C_2 shows quite a contrast to school C_1 . There are nine sections which fall below the 80 per cent correct, leaving only four sections, high in comparison, above the 80 per cent correct. Considering that both of these schools are in economic group C, the vast difference cannot be overlooked. See Figure 8.

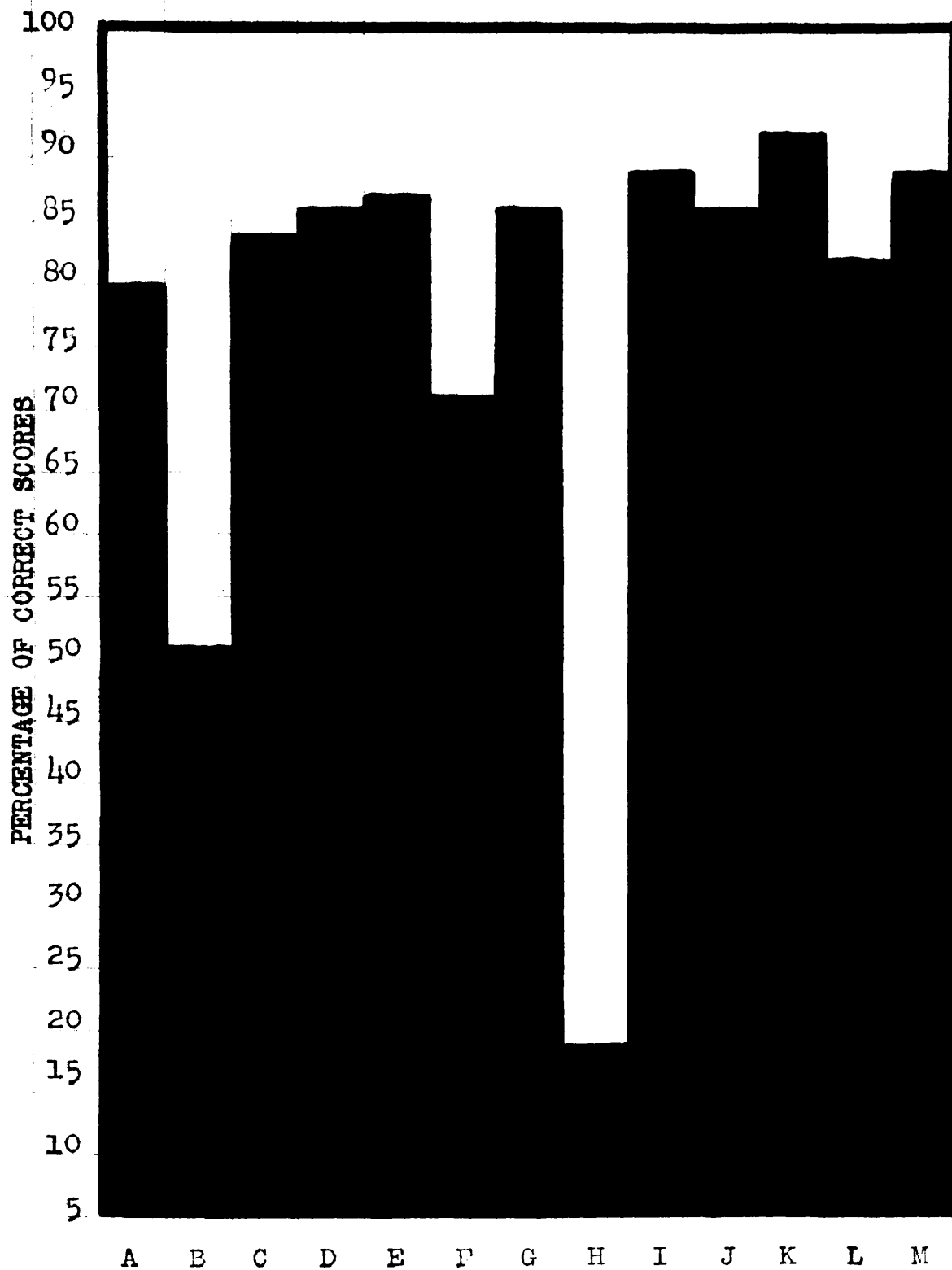


FIGURE 7

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL C₁

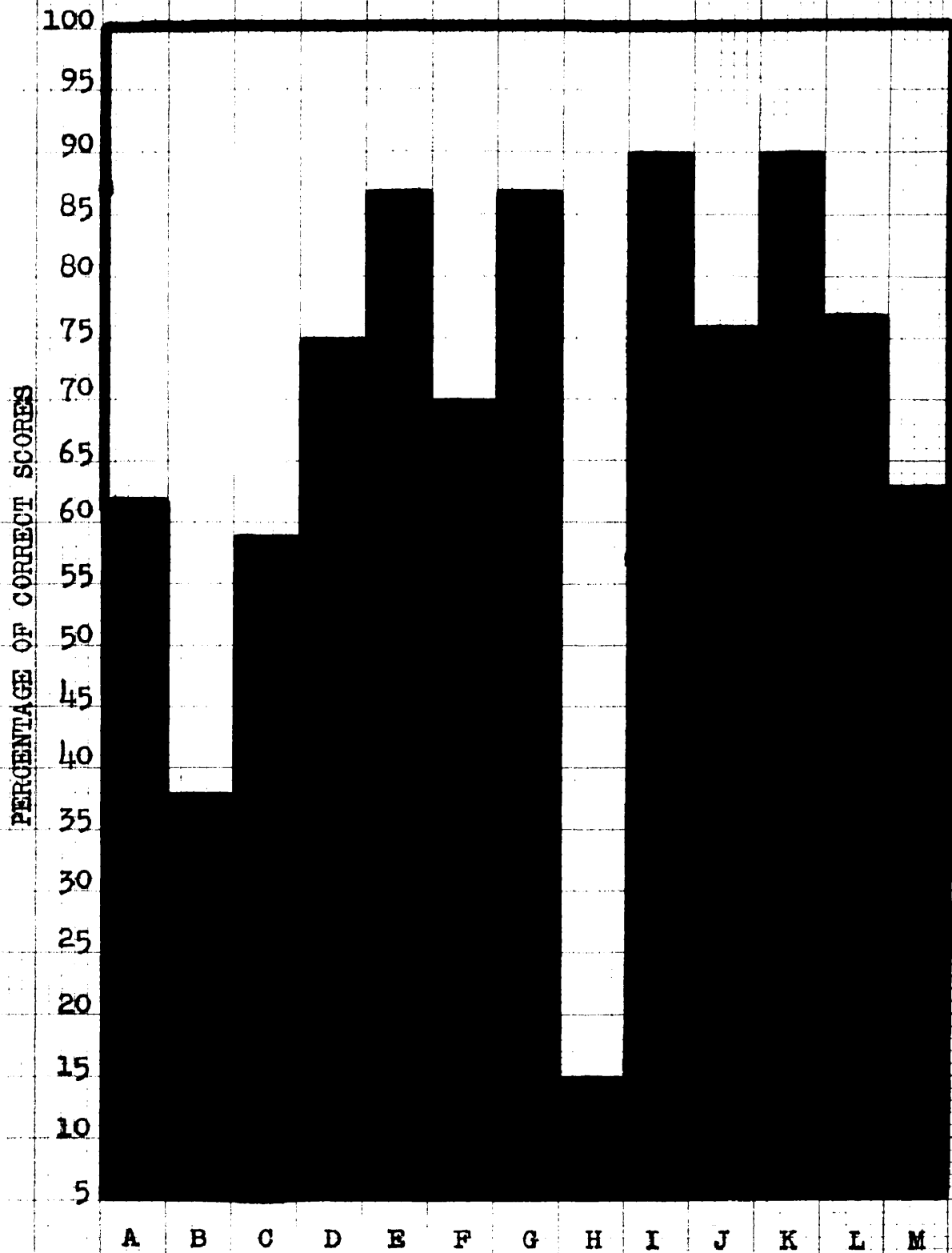


FIGURE 8

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL C₂

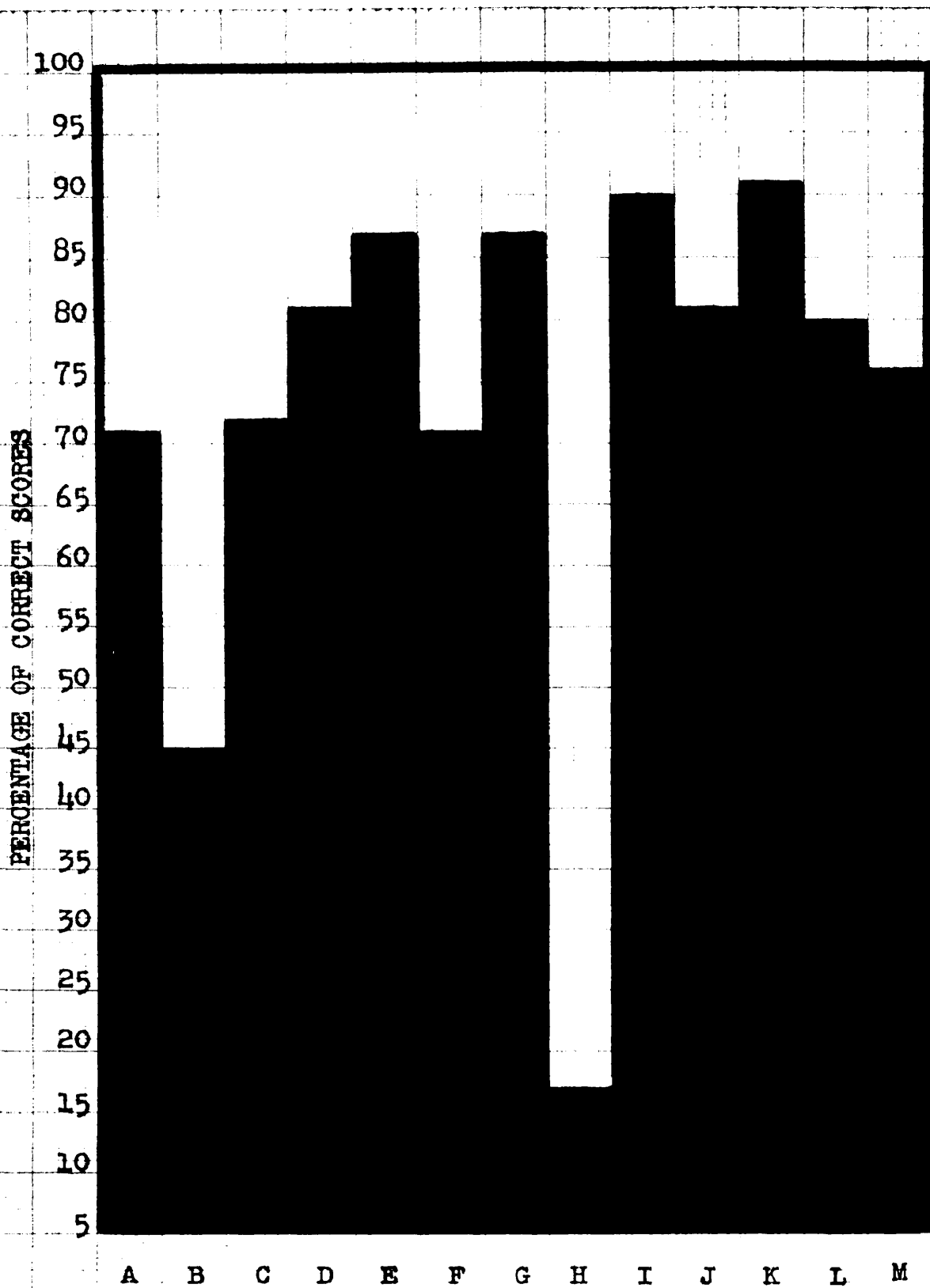


FIGURE 9

COMBINED PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT
SCORES ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOLS C₁ AND C₂

In school C_2 , the only commendable sections are E (adjectives using them and those), G (agreement of verb with the subject), I (verbs frequently misused), and K (Double negatives).

In summarizing the combined data for schools C_1 and C_2 , Figure 9, there are seven sections which have a percentage of correct scores of 80 or more. Yet, the poorest scores are found to be the same as in economic group B; in SECTIONS H, B, and F respectively.

Analysis for Economic-Group-D Schools, Figures 10, 11, and 12. Figure 10 represents the first school studied, school D_1 . Five sections extend between 80 per cent correct and 89 per cent correct scores on the Word Usage Test, leaving eight sections below the given percentage. SECTION H remains low, 26 per cent, but the B SECTION, which has been so low until now, has climbed to an unusual total of 77 per cent. This is very good, recognizing that the B SECTION totaled 45 per cent in the C group, 44 per cent in the B group and 66 per cent in the A group. Too, the F SECTION improved in this school. The H SECTION consistently remained down in the twenties, and the M SECTION went down to the 65 per cent correct score figure.

School D_2 , Figure 11, shows SECTIONS E and I as the only section to reach 80 per cent correct or more. The other eleven sections have dropped measurably.

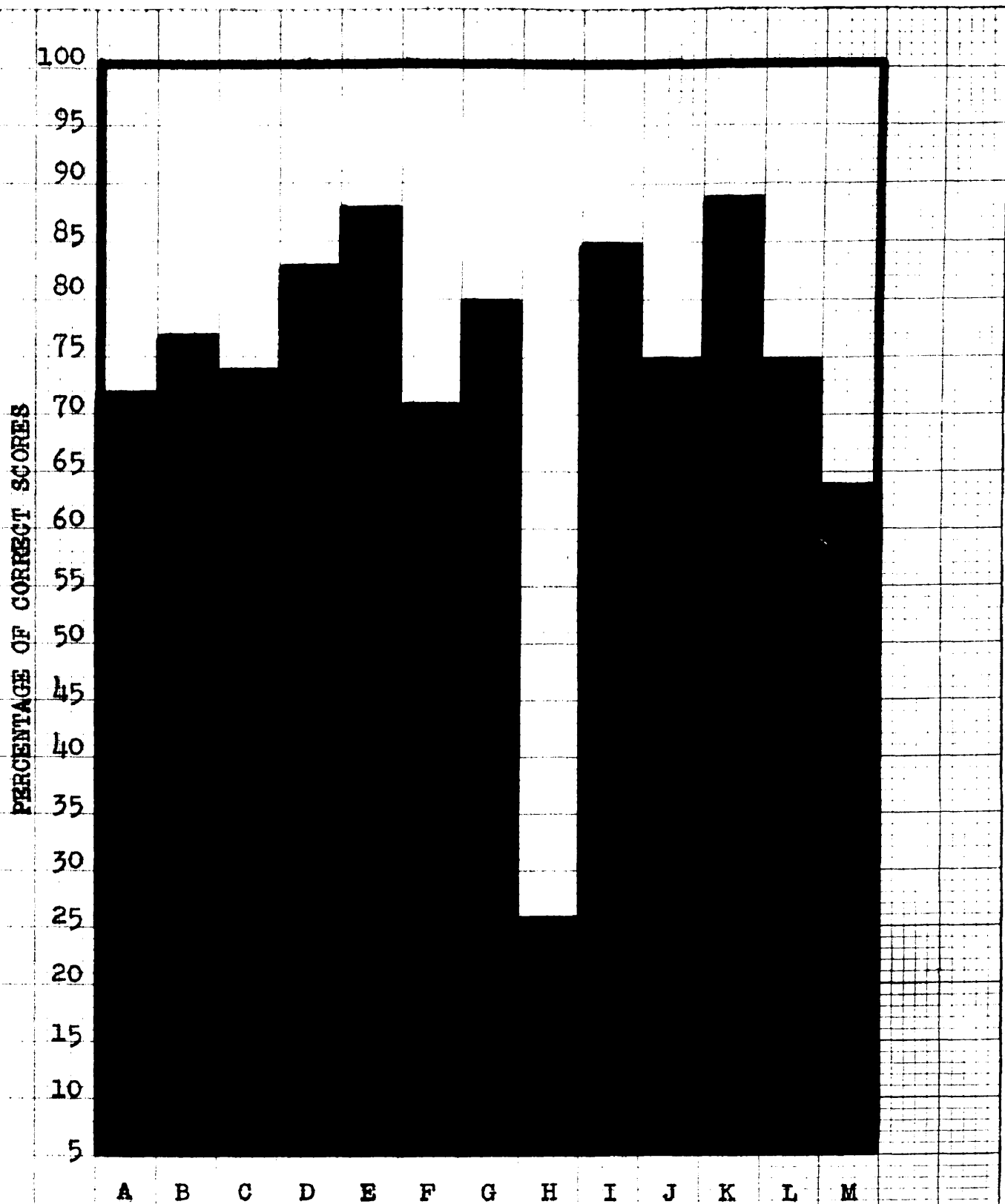


FIGURE 10

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL D1

SECTIONS H, B, M, F, and L, respectively, are the outstanding trouble spots; SECTION L being concerned with possessive pronouns.

On the combined percentage of correct scores of schools D_1 and D_2 , Figure 12, a repeat of the poorer sections as found in D_2 is observable. This includes SECTIONS H, M, B, F, and L. SECTION H drops to 24 per cent. There are five sections reaching 80 per cent or more correct scores on the Word Usage Test.

Analysis of Correct Percentage Scores for all Economic Groups, Figure 13. Having analyzed what each school had achieved and the data on the economic groups when combined, there was yet a need for a city-wide view of the achievement of all the economic groups tested. Figure 13 shows the average correct percentage scores for all the Omaha schools tested, according to grammatical divisions A through M. Six sections are above the 80 per cent correct score, which is almost half of the thirteen sections. However, there are two sections, SECTION H (using either and neither as subjects) and SECTION B (pronouns after is, are, was, and were), which are strikingly low. Too, SECTION M (preposition at end of sentence), had a poor 71 per cent rating.

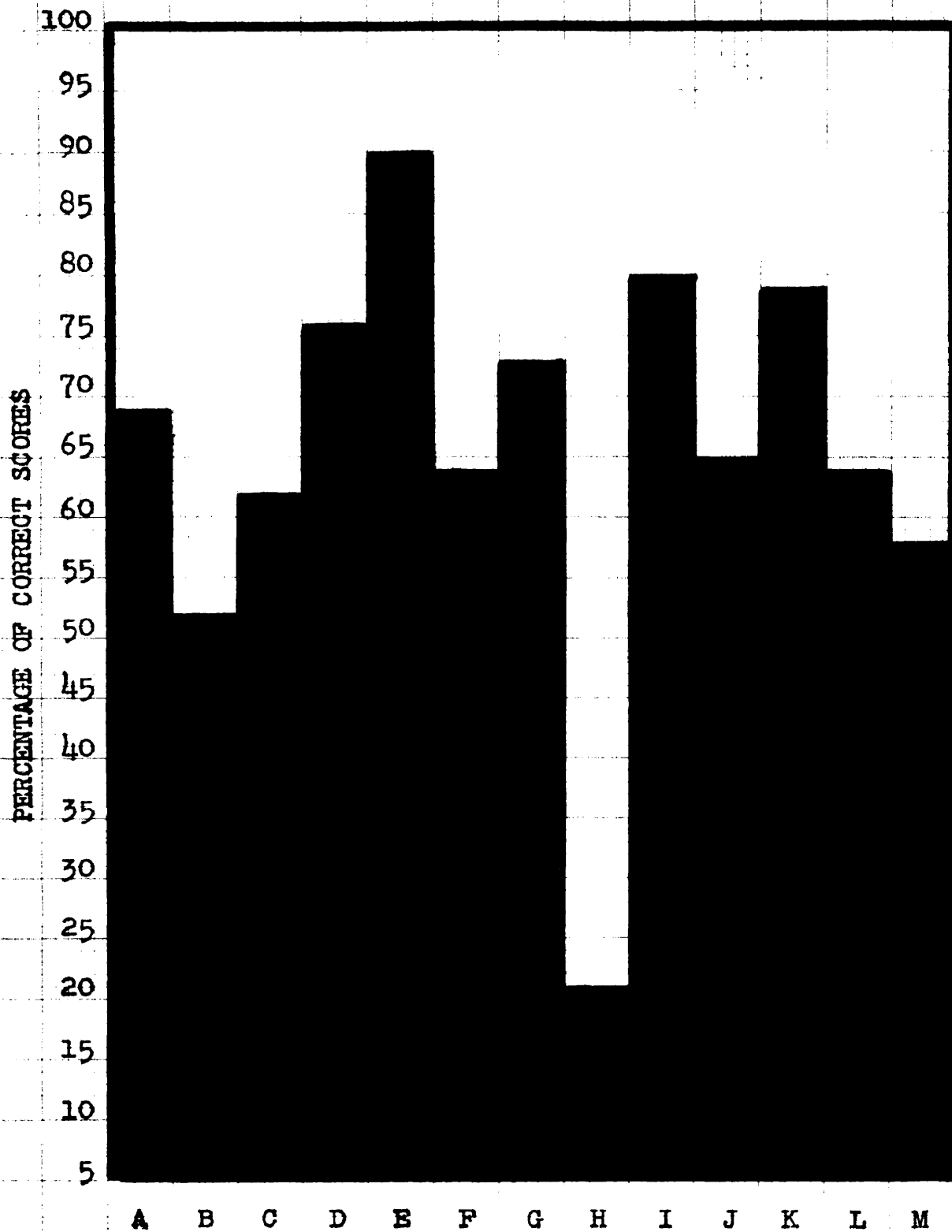


FIGURE 11

PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOL D₂

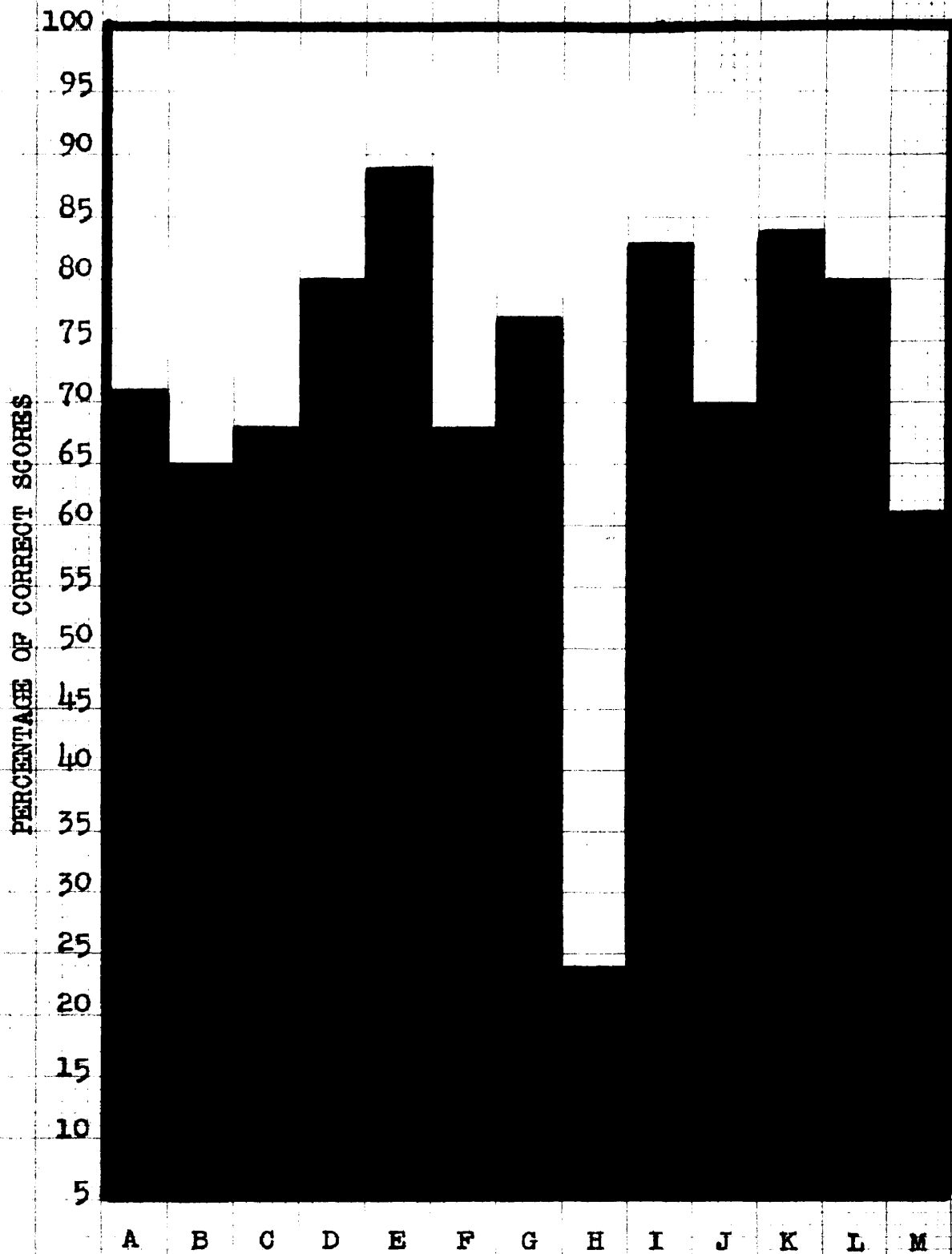


FIGURE 12

COMBINED PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT
SCORES ON WORD USAGE TEST, SCHOOLS D₁ AND D₂

SECTION C (pronouns after prepositions), and SECTION F (adverbs) had 73 per cent and 74 per cent correct scores respectively.

Analysis of Achievement as to Economic Status,
Figure 14. The facts revealed by Figure 13 are more general, and perhaps more valuable. However, it was not enough if the true purpose of this study was to compare achievement in correct word usage as to the economic status of the children. Therefore, Figure 14 was devised, showing the total percentage of correct scores for each economic group tested.

It is expected that economic group A, having the most cultural opportunities, should have the highest scores. One author states, "If he lives in a cultured atmosphere, he will have few problems in correct usage; but if he has been born into a home and community where illiterate and crude usage is prevalent, only a strongly motivated and highly efficient type of instruction can improve his speech habits."¹ Too, it is well that the B schools of the Omaha System compare favorably with the A schools, with only a percentage difference of 4 in achievement. On the other

¹Dawson, loc. cit., p. 1.

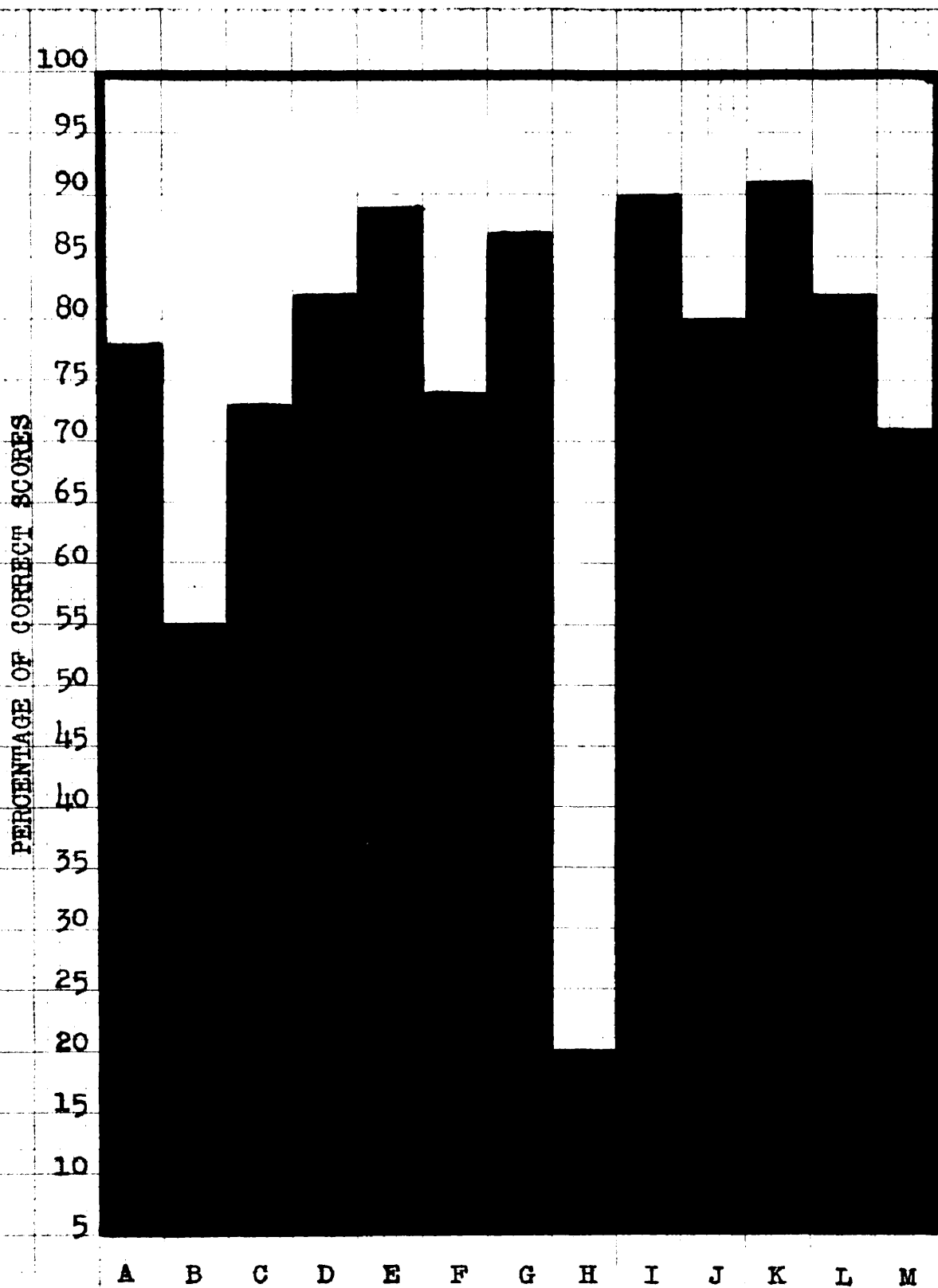


FIGURE 13

AVERAGE CORRECT PERCENTAGE SCORES
ON WORD USAGE TEST FOR ALL OMAHA SCHOOLS TESTED

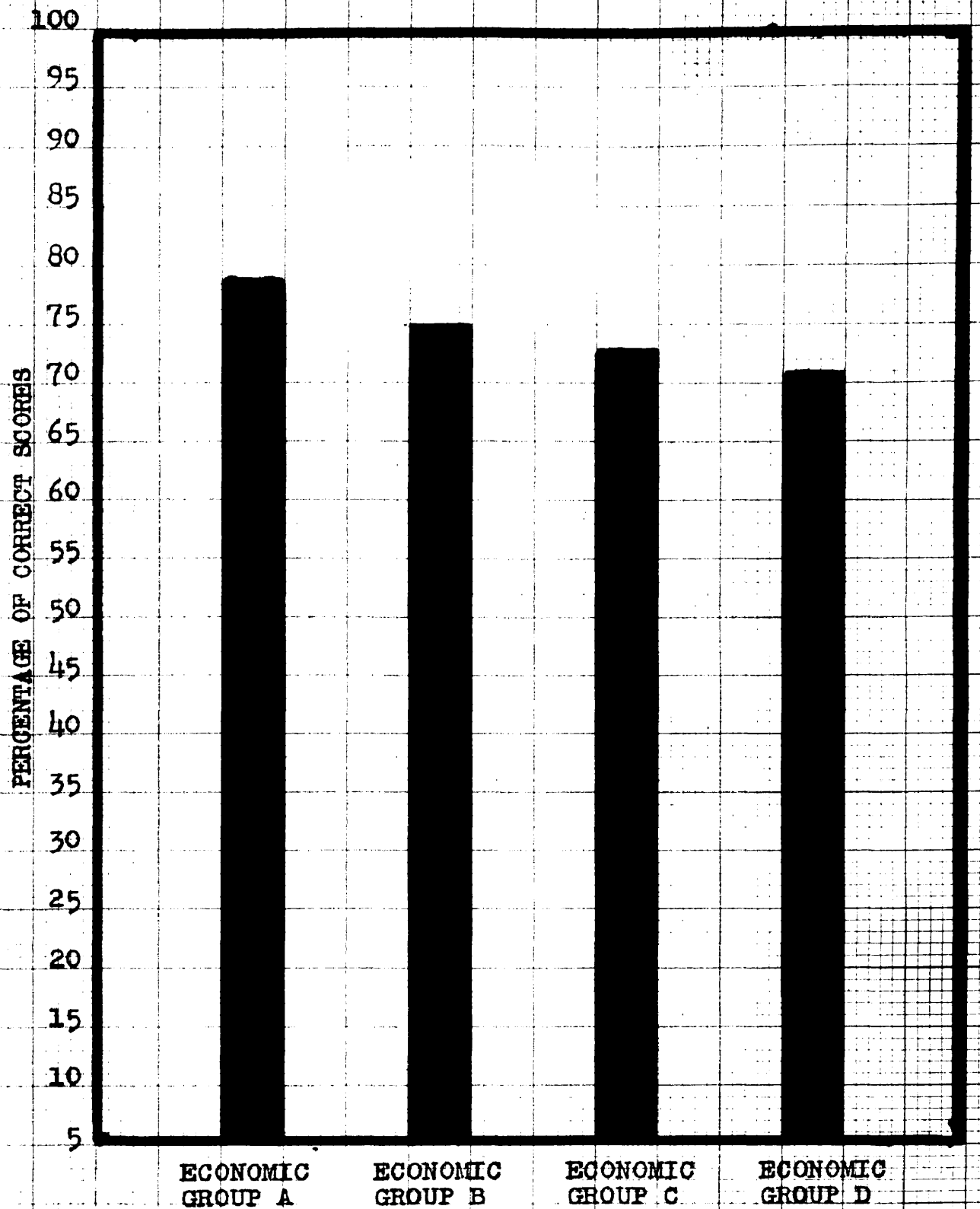


FIGURE 14

TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT
SCORES FOR EACH ECONOMIC GROUP TESTED

hand, it is desired that the A schools have a higher total percentage of correct scores to begin with.

The 73 percentage of correct scores for the C schools is lower than the B schools, as one might conclude from previous research, but very little lower--2 per cent.

Likewise, the D schools are only 2 per cent lower than the C schools. Thus, the total picture is 79 per cent correct for economic group A, 75 per cent correct for economic group B, 73 per cent correct for economic group C, and 71 per cent correct for group D. According to previous research, correct word usage in the Omaha School System is just average in the light of this study because: "The same 'error' items appear not only in all parts of our country, they also turn up in about the same proportions in every grade throughout the elementary school, the high school, and the college."² However, teachers in the intermediate department of the Omaha schools are not satisfied with just "average" standings. Educationally, Omaha can be one of the leaders of the nation. May this study be only the beginning of research, inspiration, growth, and development toward this end.

²Fries, op. cit., p. 284.

Analysis of the Percentage of Pupils Missing Each Question. In Table IV the percentage of pupils missing each test item is tabulated according to the number of items missed by each economic group. For example: Question 1 was missed by one pupil in economic group A, by no one in group B, by five in group C, and by one in group D. The total questions missed were seven. Since 261 pupils were tested, the percentage of pupils missing Question 1 was 2.6 per cent, etc.

The questions proving to be the most difficult will be summarized first. Questions 55 and 56 were missed by 87.3 per cent of the pupils. They read: "Neither of them (are, is) mine" and "Either of the balls (is, are) suitable." The next question missed by the most children, 80 per cent, was question 57 reading: "Either of the girls (are, is) capable." Question 59 was missed by 77.0 per cent of the pupils and reads: "Each of the boys (are, is) to blame." Question 58 was missed by 72.7 per cent of the students and reads: "Neither of them (is, are) willing to help." These five questions which were missed the most, questions 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59 are the sum total of SECTION H of the Word Usage Test.

TABLE IV
PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS MISSING EACH TEST QUESTION

QUESTION NUMBER	ECONOMIC GROUP A	ECONOMIC GROUP B	ECONOMIC GROUP C	ECONOMIC GROUP D	TOTAL QUES- TIONS MISSED	PER CENT MISSED
1.	1	0	5	1	7	2.6%
2.	24	19	26	32	101	38.6
3.	2	2	14	4	22	8.4
4.	7	17	20	16	60	22.9
5.	19	20	24	32	95	36.3
6.	10	19	20	21	70	26.8
7.	8	9	15	15	47	18.0
8.	10	18	23	23	74	28.3
9.	19	32	29	26	106	40.6
10.	3	15	15	17	50	19.1
11.	2	2	6	0	10	3.8
12.	21	36	33	31	121	46.3
13.	16	27	22	19	84	32.1
14.	42	43	46	43	174	66.6
15.	20	32	35	35	122	46.7
16.	36	43	46	42	167	63.9
17.	36	45	43	42	166	63.6
18.	24	38	30	32	124	47.5
19.	24	36	38	32	130	50.0
20.	11	16	17	14	58	22.2
21.	29	27	26	29	111	42.5
22.	14	9	11	9	43	16.4
23.	14	12	16	9	51	19.5
24.	11	13	16	6	46	17.6
25.	8	12	5	8	33	12.6

TABLE IV - CONTINUED

QUESTION NUMBER	ECONOMIC GROUP A	ECONOMIC GROUP B	ECONOMIC GROUP C	ECONOMIC GROUP D	TOTAL QUES- TIONS MISSED	PER CENT MISSED
26.	9	11	5	5	30	11.4%
27.	7	5	3	3	18	6.8
28.	31	32	24	32	119	45.5
29.	5	10	14	9	38	14.5
30.	9	12	24	22	67	25.6
31.	3	7	6	10	26	9.9
32.	4	3	5	8	20	7.6
33.	13	19	14	1	47	18.0
34.	3	7	5	10	25	9.5
35.	27	22	29	25	103	39.4
36.	4	2	5	4	15	5.7
37.	9	12	21	19	61	23.3
38.	12	12	25	18	67	25.6
39.	9	19	10	12	50	19.1
40.	10	31	20	21	82	31.4
41.	46	36	38	38	158	60.5
42.	10	9	5	17	41	15.7
43.	8	3	14	15	40	15.3
44.	3	2	5	6	16	6.1
45.	1	2	1	3	7	2.6
46.	6	6	13	19	44	16.8
47.	5	3	8	15	31	11.8
48.	1	2	2	9	14	5.3
49.	2	2	2	8	14	5.3
50.	13	11	17	29	69	26.4

TABLE IV - CONTINUED

QUESTION NUMBER	ECONOMIC GROUP A	ECONOMIC GROUP B	ECONOMIC GROUP C	ECONOMIC GROUP D	TOTAL QUES- TIONS MISSED	PER CENT MISSED
51.	2	5	4	13	24	9.1
52.	4	7	11	11	33	12.6
53.	0	4	8	10	22	8.4
54.	20	25	23	28	96	36.7
55.	75	51	52	50	228	87.3
56.	70	51	58	49	228	87.3
57.	65	48	55	41	209	80.0
58.	60	48	41	41	190	72.7
59.	61	47	51	42	201	77.0
60.	21	22	3	14	60	22.9
61.	4	7	11	10	32	12.2
62.	20	6	16	16	58	22.2
63.	1	1	0	3	5	1.9
64.	1	2	1	4	8	3.0
65.	3	5	2	5	15	5.7
66.	4	0	2	8	14	5.3
67.	40	21	21	38	120	45.9
68.	3	1	7	9	20	7.6
69.	12	9	10	16	47	18.0
70.	8	7	5	12	32	12.2
71.	9	4	7	7	27	10.3
72.	1	3	4	3	11	4.2
73.	2	1	4	0	7	2.6
74.	25	25	18	33	101	38.6
75.	32	33	29	28	122	46.7

TABLE IV - CONTINUED

QUESTION NUMBER	ECONOMIC GROUP A	ECONOMIC GROUP B	ECONOMIC GROUP C	ECONOMIC GROUP D	TOTAL QUES- TIONS MISSED	PER CENT MISSED
76.	4	14	11	16	45	17.2
77.	13	7	12	17	49	18.7
78.	2	6	11	15	34	13.0
79.	5	9	7	14	35	13.4
80.	2	3	5	5	15	5.7
81.	3	5	8	12	28	10.7
82.	6	6	6	17	35	13.4
83.	4	9	13	11	37	14.1
84.	0	3	4	14	21	8.0
85.	16	9	15	13	53	20.3
86.	11	17	14	34	76	29.1
87.	9	10	9	15	43	16.4
88.	5	5	10	11	31	11.8
89.	19	12	17	24	72	27.5
90.	4	12	8	14	38	14.5
91.	2	6	3	6	17	6.5
92.	1	4	3	6	14	5.3
93.	2	5	4	10	21	8.0
94.	6	3	8	14	31	11.8
95.	8	2	10	9	29	11.1
96.	5	11	5	14	35	13.4
97.	16	15	20	16	67	25.6
98.	12	8	13	14	47	18.0
99.	6	13	12	19	50	19.1
100.	25	33	18	26	102	39.0

The third purpose of this study was to locate any areas of difficulty for this age and grade level, and to find the areas, if any, where reteaching would be profitable. There is a possibility that the teaching of either and neither as subjects with a plural or a singular verb is too difficult for sixth grade children. In one sixth grade in which this test was given, the teacher was very shocked at the results of SECTION H, thinking that she had done a very thorough job of teaching this material. Upon reviewing the material, the difficulty lay in the prepositional phrase preceding the verb. For example, there is the prepositional phrase "of the balls" in the following sentence: "Either of the balls (is, are) suitable." Until this time, the children have been thoroughly taught that a plural subject takes a plural verb. Immediately they think "balls" as the subject; therefore, "are" must be the correct verb. Sixth grade children are able to recognize prepositions as such, but to pick prepositional phrases out of a sentence seems to be too abstract for the majority of them. The authors of The Intermediate Manual came to the following conclusion:

Most technical grammar lies beyond the limits of the sixth grade, but as much functional grammar as possible should be taught to average and superior pupils; somewhat less should be taught to slower pupils.³

³Cincinnati Public Schools, The Intermediate Manual, Grades Four, Five, and Six (Curriculum Bulletin 125, Cincinnati, Ohio: Board of Education), p. 106.

Question fourteen ranked sixth as to the most errors, with 66.6 per cent of the pupils missing the question which is located in SECTION B and states: "The sports editors are George and (him, he)." The total per cent of pupils missing question sixteen was 63.9, and it reads: "The assistant editors were Jack and (her, she)." Question seventeen was missed by 63.6 per cent of the pupils, and states: "The best tennis players were Mary and (he, him)." The latter three questions are in SECTION B, proving again that the B SECTION is more difficult and reteaching would be profitable.

One explanation for the many errors in SECTION B was that they were the result of poor oral usage habits; not because the material was too difficult to understand, nor that it was improperly taught. Dawson gives a profound statement:

In fact, research indicates that the patterns for oral language are largely established by the age of eight, most children of that age having acquired the ability to use various forms of sentences and to speak in a characteristically individual manner.⁴

⁴Mildred A. Dawson, "Oral Communication," Language Arts Leaflet No. 2, (New York: World Book Company, 1949), p. 1.

Research further points out:

Upon entering school, grammatical usage is fairly well established in relation to the simple child experiences. . . . Scientific investigation shows that most of the difficulty lies in a few irregular verb forms and a few pronouns.⁵

Thus, the difficulty of the pronoun is presented in
SECTION B.

To turn to the brighter side of the percentage of pupils missing each question, there were twenty-five questions which were missed by less than 10 per cent of all the pupils: questions 1, 3, 11, 27, 31, 32, 34, 36, 44, 45, 48, 49, 53, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 72, 73, 80, 84, 91, 92, and 93. Of these questions, six were from SECTION I, (verbs frequently misused). Also, in this group were all of the questions in SECTION E, (adjectives). Of the total hundred questions, 76 were missed by less than one-third of the students, and 67 were missed by less than one-fourth.

Another purpose of this study was to compare the achievement in correct word usage as to sex. Table III contains the summary of this data. Although the girls made 5.6 less errors per girl than the boys made per boy,

⁵Frances Jenkins, Language Development in the Elementary Grades (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936), p. 153.

the difference is not large, and there is little reason for the boys to say that girls are just naturally better in English than boys. They are not.

Results of Total Findings

Figures 1 through 13 have given a true picture of the "uprising" and "downfallings" of correct word usage in the sixth grades of the Omaha schools. A large portion of the results are favorable, but there are areas in which reteaching would be profitable and one area in which the material was very difficult for the children.

A comparison of the achievement in correct word usage as to the general economic status, shown in Figure 14, shows that the better the economic status of an Omaha school, the higher the correct usage scores will be. However, the differences are not large.

These findings are verified by making a T-score comparison of the data on the various schools. In economic schools A and B a T-score of 3.5085 indicated a significance at the one per cent level. In economic schools A and C, the T-score of 4.2364 indicated a significance at the one per cent level. In comparing A and D schools, the T-score of 6.9524 indicated a significance at the one per cent level.

Schools B and D had a T-score of 3.2735 indicating a significance at the one per cent level. However, when economic schools B and C were compared, the T-score of .6059 was not significant at the one or the five per cent levels. Thus, it appears that the two middle economic groups are more closely related as to correct word usage than any of the other economic combinations.

In Chapter IV generalizations and conclusions are set forth.

CHAPTER IV

GENERALIZATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study to test a cross section of the sixth grades in the Omaha Public Schools in order to compare achievement in correct word usage (1) in relation to the general economic status; (2) in relation to the sex; (3) in order to locate any areas of difficulty for this age and grade level; and (4) to find the areas, if any, in which reteaching would be profitable.

A Word Usage Test was distributed to specific sixth grades, according to economic status, in the Omaha Public Schools. The results of these tests were analyzed, and the findings led to the following generalizations:

1. There is great variability between schools in the same economic strata. School C_1 had ten out of thirteen SECTIONS 80 per cent or more correct usage; whereas, School C_2 in the same economic strata had only four out of thirteen SECTIONS 80 per cent or more correct word usage. School C_1 scored better than either of the B Schools.

2. Girls make fewer errors in correct word usage than do boys. In Economic Groups A, B, C, and D, the girls made 4.3, 8.6, 8.6, and .6 less errors respectively than did the boys. The two middle economic groups show much the larger differences.

3. The use of the singular verb with either and neither is much too difficult for the sixth grade level. The average correct percentage score for this SECTION, all economic groups combined, was twenty per cent.

4. There are three SECTIONS in which reteaching would be profitable. SECTIONS B, F, and M had an overall average 55, 74, and 71 per cent correct respectively.

5. The areas of difficulty are concentrated in specific areas of verbs and pronouns for the most part.

It would appear from the generalizations that the economic status of a group does affect word usage. It does not follow that it completely determines correct word usage. Neither can it be said that correct-usage is determined by the economic station in life. Realizing that economic factors have a direct and sizable influence on correct word usage, there are other factors which are vitally important, such as methods of instruction, motivation, teacher-pupil relationships, classroom atmosphere, and many others. Also, it must be concluded that girls do make fewer errors in correct word usage than do boys. It can also be concluded that there is one area too difficult for this age child and three areas in which reteaching would be profitable. Generally speaking, the areas of difficulty are concentrated

in specific areas of verbs and pronouns. If these particular areas are concentrated on by pupils and teachers alike, there is no reason why the Omaha Public Schools should not be in the upper ten per cent in correct-word usage.

Recommendations

The consideration of what is correct in the usage of English is yet a controversial subject.¹ Many changes occur and have occurred in the usage of English. Research has proved that habit formation precedes by some years the ability to comprehend grammatical relationships. This is probably the greatest step forward. The fact that men are making more scientific investigations than ever before to discover the most common difficulties is a second great improvement. Also, Pooley's study showing that the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades had so many new concepts and principles introduced to them that the pupils found it difficult to grasp them, much less remember them, has been very valuable. However, there is a great need for further study and research in the field of correct English usage.

A follow-up of this study at a later date would be very worth while.

¹Mildred A. Dawson, "Summary of Research Concerning English Usage," Elementary English, Vol. XXVIII (March, 1951), pp. 141-7.

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